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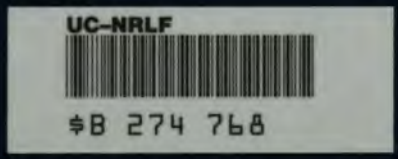

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WHISPER!

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WHISPER!

BY

FRANCES WYNNE

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS AND JOHN LANE
At the Sign of the BODLEY HEAD *in* VIGO STREET
1893

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WHISPER!

BY

FRANCES WYNNE

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.
1890

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FRANCES WYNNE: A MEMORY.

THIS volume makes it appearance under sad circumstances, for while the sheets were yet in the binder's hands, the young author died, at the age of 27. Her poems make their own eulogy, but Frances Wynne was so bright a creature, so sweet and lovely a character, that it is desired to preserve here some record of her charm for those readers who never can know how dear her human personality was. She died within a week of the birth of her little son; and after eighteen months of a most happy married life. Of her the ancients would have said, "Whom the gods love die young," for during her brief life she lived every day in the full sunshine of love and joy, and passed away before the shadows began to lengthen on her years. Thinking of her now it is impossible to conceive her old and calm. She was so gay, so coaxing, so full of child-like *naïveté* and charm, that one can best imagine for her the perpetual youth of dead at 27. She was born and lived her girlhood in the quiet Irish village of Collon. Her

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years were brooded over by the tender love of an intensely-loved father and mother. The big, kindly house is in the village street; but there is a roomy garden of roses and lilies, hollyhocks and lavender; and all around stretch the rich pasture fields of Louth, and on the horizon are the ever-present Irish hills, and not so far away there is the sea. Frances Wynne had a very happy childhood, its only storms the troubles entailed by her tender heart and impetuous affections. When she loved she loved intensely, and her childish rhymes to her dear governess are veritable love letters. Her affections were very impulsive during her short length of days, but they were also very faithful. Her admirations were so generous that her reports were not always to be accepted by colder-eyed folk; but hers might well be the clearer vision, dear soul. Her love for children was a passion with her, and the least inviting baby had some divine attraction for her. She was greatly loved by children and the poor, and animals, and by her social inferiors. She had won the hearts not only of the servants of her own house, but of every house where she visited. I have often wondered what charm had given her this universal power. It was not mere graciousness, for many a one has that. I think it was her sympathy and good will—her love for her kind which made it impossible for her to look down on any one. There her admiration stood her in good stead. Her village *coteries* were the most interesting and delightful people; her humble friends she invested

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with the finest qualities. So it was that some of the saddest mourners by her grave were her old servants, and the poor who had known her from babyhood. Nothing was common or unclean to her; and when she married her cousin, Mr. Henry Wynne, and came to live in London, the swirling crowd in Southampton Row, above which they had their eyrie, was but a wonderful new experience, full of the most intense interest. So too when her husband took orders, and settled in an East End curacy. She was never home-sick for the roses and the fields. To hear her, Stepney Green was better than meadows; though she sang no more her old songs that might have been the very lark-song of those meadows, but a more serious, new strain. To her happy heart and bounteous nature the East and its people took on a grace and human interest not naturally theirs. Then too her son was coming, her star that was to arise in the East. But with the son's star in the House of Birth the mother's was in the House of Death. She went away, dear child, with the illusions of the morning yet upon her, and the new light of a great joy. She had ardently desired a son, and she had scarcely the pain of parting from him and her dear husband, for she sank into the arms of death like any child sleeping. She would say, perhaps, like Pompilia:—

> "All women are not mothers of a boy
> Though they live twice the length of my whole life
> And, as they fancy, happily all the same."

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She had, indeed, the ripest experience when she died at 27. She had drunk deep of the cup of life she had seized so eagerly, as if she knew there was not much time. Dead at 27; but an exquisite memory of joy and love to those of us who knew her, and who can never think of her as anything but young and glad. She had a sweet brown face like the old poet's mistress:—

> "Brown is my Love but graceful
> And each renownèd whiteness
> Matched with that lovely brown loseth its brightness."

A face whose winning charm, its roguishness and tenderness no mere photograph could ever reproduce. But these words may speak of her to some who never knew her sweetness.

K. H.

September 6th, 1893.

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WHISPER!

You saucy south wind, setting all the budded beech boughs swinging
Above the wood anemones that flutter, flushed and white,
When far across the wide salt waves your quick way you were winging,
Oh! tell me, tell me, did you pass my sweetheart's ship last night?
Ah! let the daisies be,
South wind! and answer me:
Did you my sailor see?
Wind, whisper very low,
For none but you must know
I love my lover so.

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You've come by many a gorsy hill, your breath has sweetness in it,
You've ruffled up the high white clouds that fleck the shining blue;
You've rushed and danced and whirled, so now perhaps you'll spare a minute,
To tell me whether you have seen my lover brave and true?

Wind, answer me, I pray.
I'm lonelier every day,
My love is far away;
And, sweet wind, whisper low,
For none but you must know
I love my lover so.

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MEADOW-SWEET.

THE meadow-sweet was uplifting
Its plumelets of delicate hue,
The clouds were all dreamily drifting
Above in the blue,
On the day when I broke from my tether,
And fled from square and from street;—
The day we went walking together
In the meadow, Sweet.

The meadow, sweet with its clover
And bright with its buttercups lay;
The swallows kept eddying over,
All flashing and gay;
I remember a fairylike feather
Sailed down your coming to greet,
The day we went walking together
In the meadow, Sweet.

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Ah! the meadow, Sweet! and the singing
Of birds in the boughs overhead!
And your soft little hand to mine clinging,
And the words that you said,
When, bold in the beautiful weather,
I laid my love at your feet,
The day we went walking together
In the meadow, Sweet.

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A GARDEN REVERIE

I'm sitting in the garden's sheltered angle,
Where our thick-ivied house-wall faces west;
Near by, the rooks in the great elm trees wrangle
Over their building on this day of rest.

But the hoarse sound of cheerful rookery quarrels,
The gay child-voices in the village street,
And the faint twitterings in the garden laurels,
Seem to enhance the Sunday stillness sweet.

The sky is very pure and blue and gleaming,
Each grass-blade has a little silver shine;
Down the trim border comes the sunlight streaming
Along a gold and purple crocus line.

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With open leaves, wind-stirred and lightly lifted,
"Essays of Elia" lies upon my knee,
And on and on my thoughts have idly drifted
Into the happy realm of reverie.

Here in this peaceful place and pleasant weather,
The sweet "Dream Children" seem once more to rise:
I see them—their small hands are locked together,
The laughter brightens in their childish eyes.

And dear Charles Lamb himself is o'er them bending,
With a most wistful tender smile for each,
His hesitating accents only lending
A rarer measured quaintness to his speech.

"Ah! loving heart, so brave and self-forgetful,
Ah! little fair Dream-children, do not go"—
In vain I plead: with moist eyes, and regretful,
I watch them dim and ever dimmer grow.

My book falls heavily down, and so awaking
From my day-dream, I find the shadows long;
I hear through all the noise the rooks are making
The church-bells sounding clear for evensong.

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IN THE SUN.

I.

Down in the old-fashioned garden
The glittering white lilies blow;
On the porch the great pink roses
Stir languidly to and fro.

A warm haze is quivering faintly
'Twixt earth and the blue June sky;
A bee in his soft plush jacket
Goes droning lazily by.

In the midst of the sunny grass plot
Lie the children, tired with play;
Of all the beautiful blossoms
None are so lovely as they.

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There's Floss, like a stately sun-flower,
With brown eyes and red gold hair;
And Mabel, a bobbing pansy,
Her sweet little chin in the air.

There's May, like a big moon daisy,
With innocent, wide-eyed face;
And wood-anemone Ethel,
Full of sweet babyish grace.

They bask in a happy circle,
They are brimming over with fun;
"There's nothing so nice," say the children,
"As staying still in the sun."

II.

In a squalid street of the city,
Where the houses are old and tall,
A long row of merry children
Sit under a high brick wall.

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Their small pale faces are dirty,
  Their rough little heads are bare,
They never saw flowers growing,
  Except through the bars of a square.

But God's dear sunshine is flooding
  The poor place with radiant light—
They are not cold now, nor hungry,
  They've a shelter to sleep in to-night.

Harsh winter days are forgotten,
  That soaked their thin rags with rain;
The baby has left off crying,
  Lame Philip is not in pain.

And little feet that are tired
  Have got no errands to run.
"There's nothing rests," say the children,
  "Like sitting still in the sun."

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SEA-GULLS.

EARLY in the year,
When blustering March was here,
And the clouds seemed always grey,
There came a sudden, sun-bright day,
In the midst of the rainy weather,
Shining out of a blue and breezy sky,
Shedding a silver shimmer down on the sea.
Do you remember, my friend, how we,
On that morning clear,
Left the town behind us, you and I,
And lay amongst flower-flecked gorse and heather,
We two together?
Down below us, the glittering bay
In rippled radiance stretched away;
A distant church spire here and there
Flashed in the sunshine, aglint and fair;

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And far, far off, all faintly hued
In the flooding light, the mountains stood.
The sea-gulls, with wide white wings outspread,
Passed so close to us overhead,
As they slowly flew,
That, though we spoke quietly, I and you,
They might have heard what we said.

Ah! sea-gulls, swooping, slipping,
Under the water blue;
Sea-gulls diving and dipping;
Ah! sea-gulls, softly swaying,
Sea-gulls, poising and playing,
I wonder if you knew
What we were saying?

When the heather wore its purplest glory,
And the gorse gleamed with its rarest gold,
One of us was listening to a story,
Rapturously new, and yet how old!

Ah! sea-gulls, restless, roving,
Sea-gulls, daring and bold,
There is nought so sweet as loving!

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When the wild nights come of storm and raining,
And dark waves sweep in with sullen roar,
One of us will still be sobbing, straining,
After that which tarries evermore.

Sea-gulls, with tired wings trailing,
The long black billows o'er,
Ah! sea-gulls, wandering, wailing,
On the deserted shore,
There is nought so sad as failing!

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JESSIE.

MUCH has happened since I went from home:
A great creamy yellow rose has blown,
All in foamy drifts the pinks have come,
And the sparrow's little ones are flown.

Have I been but one brief week away?
Long it seemed to me, and loveless too.
Yet, my Jessie, 'gainst that time's cold grey
Glows one vivid flower,—the thought of you.

You are just a tiny baby child,
Very innocent-eyed and golden-haired,
But you put your hand in mine, and smiled,
In the far strange town, where no one cared.

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And you wondered vaguely, I suppose,
Why the stranger's lips were quivering so,
Why she held you folded long and close
In her arms before she let you go.

You will never know, my Jessie dear—
For we shall not meet on earth again—
How you crossed a lonely day and drear,
Like a sunbeam slanting through the rain.

But your fair child's face will shine out still
In my heart, through softening mists of tears.
I shall ofttimes feel, with sudden thrill,
Your sweet lips touch mine, down all the years.

And one day, when God has set my feet
On His golden heavenly pavement clear,
I shall find you in some radiant street—
Tell you all about it, Jessie dear.

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THE FIRST CUCKOO.

THE dreaming hills are grey as glass,
A soft south wind is blowing;
The daisies twinkle in the grass—
One almost sees them growing.
The sky is far away and blue,
The fleecy clouds are drifting,
And o'er the meadow's vivid hue
Quick lights and shades are shifting.

Along the brilliant gorse in flower
The happy sunshine rushes;
And trembles forth from bush and bower
The singing of the thrushes.
Hark! plaintive through the rapturous strain,
Upon my ear is falling
A note that brings half joy, half pain—
The tardy cuckoo's calling.

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It is the first sweet time this year
I've heard that distant chanting,
So I've a right to wish. Oh, dear!
If wishing just meant granting!
I'd wish I might have back again
A day I well remember,
An afternoon of wind and rain
That came in late November.

The yellow grass was dank that day,
The sodden hedges dripping;
A reckless wind from branch and spray
Their shivering leaves was stripping.
The gloom fell down on birds and men,
That day so damp and chilly;
And yet I long for it again
When boughs have rose and lily.

O dear lost time! the world is gay,
The birds are singing—only
I was so happy that grey day,
And this sweet day I'm lonely.

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The sun pours down his rain of gold
  Through green young leaves above me;
But oh, for a day of the days of old,
  And you who used to love me!

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MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

O BEAUTIFUL sunbeam, straying
In through the wide church door,
I wish I was with you, playing
Down there on the cool stone floor.
For I am so tired of sitting
Upright and stiff and still,
And you, you go dancing, flitting
Gaily, wherever you will;
And you've nothing to do but glisten,
And no one is ever vexed
Because you forget to listen,
Or can't remember the text.

Dear sunbeam, I'm pondering, pondering,
Were they all fast asleep—the flowers?
When you came on your bright wings wandering,
To earth in the morning hours.

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And where have you since been roaming
The long, long hot day through?
Will you welcome the purple gloaming
That means "going home" to you?

Have you been to the river, I wonder?—
The river, shining and wide,
Where coots dart flashingly under,
And water weeds rock with the tide.
Did you see the big daisies bobbing?
Were the speedwells like bits of sky?
Did you hear the sad grasses sobbing
Whenever the wind went by?

Dear sunbeam, I'll be so lonely
When you have gone quite away,
And even now you are only
A faint gold splash on the grey.
Ah! at last the sermon is over;
I know the text—"God is Light"—
Wait a minute, sunbeam, you rover,
And let me bid you "Good Night."

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A REMONSTRANCE.

LET me be! How could I but remember
While the dreary winter days were here,
When the ceaseless raining of December
Beat upon the windows chill and drear?
Could I meet, with brave heart all unshrinking,
The strange year that hurried towards me fast,
While there were such long, long nights for thinking
On the sweet and bitter of the past?

Perhaps I'd have forgot when spring came, bringing
Drifts of flowers and radiant skies of blue,
And the thrush with sudden raptured singing
Thrilled the odorous larch woods through and through.
But a thought, that crossed the joy of finding
One day the first purple violet,
Filled my eyes with quick tears burning, blinding—
Shook my soul with passionate regret.

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Now there are bright trails of poppies, setting
All the golden harvest fields aflame,
And I am no nearer to forgetting
Than I was before the summer came.
Haply by the time dead leaves are driving
On the pitiless wind from every tree,
You'll believe how wearily I'm striving,
Realize how vainly. Let me be!

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MARIGOLDS.

It has gone from us, our sweet summer weather,
Passed with its glow and sunshine bliss away;
I and the marigolds are sad together—
We had half hoped that it would always stay.

In the deserted dreary garden spaces
We are alone, the marigolds and I;
Coldly the air is blowing on our faces
Out of a gusty cloud-heaped evening sky.

By the far river goes a heron sailing
With his wide purple wings all sunset-lit;
Turns from the frayed, gold west so quickly paling,
Flies towards the grey, is lost a flash in it.

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Slowly the fearful dark comes creeping, growing,
Blurs the red glimmer of the maple leaves,
Steals down to where my marigolds are showing,
And parts them from their friend, who stands and grieves.

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A VOYAGE IN THE ROCKING CHAIR.

A QUAINT, old room, full of firelight glow:
Warm glint and gleam, a shadowy wall,
Showers of vivid red sparks that fall—
The rocking-chair swings low.

A long, gold, billowy sweep of sky:
Between that wondrous glory and me,
Flickering leaves on a poplar tree—
The rocking-chair swings high.

Now seems the world of the work-a-day
A dim coast-line, that lessens and dies.
Dreamily blissful, I sink and rise
With quiet rhythmic sway.

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My pilot, Peace, brings me safe to far
Ideal Land. I drift with the tide,
Up the still waters that lie inside
The shining harbour bar.

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A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY.

AWAY from the town, in the safe retreat
Of a rare old garden, sunny and sweet,
Four little happy children played
In and out of the light and shade,
Through a long summer's blissful prime,
Once on a time.
Between the garden borders neat
The gravel-walks stretched warm and wide.
The diligent brown-coated bees
Were ever astir
Among the roses and lavender
And the great dark pansies, yellow-eyed,
And the faint sweet-peas.
But the children on their tireless feet
Flitted about in the pleasant heat
Like the butterflies,
Nor ever cared to stray outside

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Their Paradise.
Round the old garden was a wall;
Snapdragons crowded along the ledge,
Crimson and tall,
And in every niche and crevice small
Tiny mosses uncurled.
And though the children would often try,
And even stand on tip-toe to look,
They could hardly see over the top at all.
But there was one corner not quite so high,
And above it, against the farthest edge
Of the beautiful sky—
(The part that was golden and green and red
In the evenings, when they were going to bed)—
A row of poplars shook and shook;
And the children said
The poplars must be the end of the world.

On one of those happy summer days—
When the garden borders were all ablaze,
And the children for once felt too hot to play,
Though all their lessons were done,
But lay
On the grass and watched a delicate haze

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Quiver across the brooding blue
Up to the sun—
Something happened strange and new.
For a beggar pushed open the garden door
And stood in the flooding sunshine bright
Full in the wondering children's sight,
A pale-faced woman, young and footsore,
With a baby boy on her arm.
Her ragged dress was all powdered grey
With the dust of the road.
She fixed a long bewildered gaze
On the quaint old garden gay,
Then, with a sudden smile and a nod,
She pointed in rapt delight
To the place where, cool and shimmering white,
The lilies shone—
Touched the baby and said, "Ah! plaze,
If it wudn't do them flowers no harm,
Childhren, will yiz give him *wan*
For the love o' God?"
The children stared, an awe-struck band,
At the stranger pair.
Then the youngest ran, and with one bold twist
Of his firm little wrist

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He wrenched a thick lily stem in two,
And put it, with all its blossoms fair,
In the beggar baby's hand.
"Ah! acushla," the woman said, "there's few
In this hard world like *you.*
I've a long, long way to thravel yet,
Beyond them high threes over there,
But I'll not forget
To pray for you and yours everywhere,
Never fear.
Good evenin', God love ye, dear."

"She's gone," said Cissy; "how queer she spoke!"
Whispered Dickie, "Oh, Tom, you've broke
The best lily: whatever *shall* you do
When gardener sees the empty space
There where it grew,
And father has to be told?"
"It was for the love of God, you see,
I did it," said Tom; "so maybe He
Won't let them scold."
"We know now," said Will,
"There's world the other side of that hill."

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"PERHAPS."

A WHISPER of spring's in the air—
A soft west wind setting the elm-boughs a-sway—
There are more flowers I'm sure on the gorse than there were
When last I came this way.
They say,
I think, perhaps, it is true,
That as long as the flower's on the gorse
Love is in season too.
But it must be true of course,
And if not, why should I care?
The sky is shining blue;
The sparrows twitter anew
Of beginning to pair,
And we've passed the shortest day.

How the gorse will blaze
'Neath the flitting, rushing brightness of April days!

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In a glowing mass 'twill sweep down the bare hill-side,
The golden overflow round the bank will glide
Where the dear blue violets hide,
And the careless sunshine strays.
Shall I be all alone?
Or will some one come to love me
When the white clouds race above me,
And the buttercups have grown?
Perhaps—ah! who can tell,
When the meadows flush with clover
Perhaps I'll have a lover,
Perhaps he'll love me well.

All too surely the year will wane,
The fair gorse-gold will tarnish and dim,
But lonely eyes shall ne'er seek in vain
A fugitive flower 'twixt the thorns so grim,
While love and hope remain.
Perhaps if I had—him,
And he was kind,
And called me gently by my name,
Perhaps I should not mind
Even when winter came,
And the dreary, dreary rain.

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MARGUERITES.

THE wind comes eddying from the sea,
All rush and whirl and clatter;
Cold rain falls intermittently
With sudden gusty patter.
The dead leaves loose their shivering hold
As each rude breath sweeps o'er them,
Poor crumpled bits of red and gold,
I am so sorry for them!

Poor dears, does no one care for you
This dreary autumn weather?
Poor dears, I'm very lonely, too;
I think we'll die together.
Ah! someone will be sorry then
Perhaps, with vain regretting,
And wish he'd loved me more; but men
Are quick about forgetting.

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Let no one say that "Life is sweet"
While seas keep friends asunder,
For,—can that be a marguerite
High up the bank, I wonder?
You pallid lingerer tossing there
With shining disc above me,
Come down and shed your petals fair,
And tell me does he love me!

"Loves;" "Not;" "Loves;" "Loves not;"
"Loves" you say?
Why, how the wind's abating!
A really brisk autumnal day
Is most invigorating!
There soon will be a gleam of sun;
The purple clouds are lifting;
But still the sad leaves, one by one,
Go drifting, drifting, drifting.

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NOCTURNE.

THE long day was bright,
It slowly passed from the purple slopes of the hill;
And then the night
Came floating quietly down, and the world grew still.

Now I lie awake,
The south wind stirs the white curtains to and fro.
Cries the corncrake
In fields that stretch by the stream-side, misty and low.

At the meadow's edge
I know the faint pink clover is heavy with dew.
Under the hedge
The speedwell closes its sweet eyes, dreamily blue.

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With pursed rosy lips
The baby buds are asleep on the apple tree.
The river slips
Beneath the scarcely swayed willows, on to the sea.

The dark grows, and grows,
But I'm too happy to sleep, and the reason why
No creature knows,
Save certain little brown birds, and my love, and I.

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LITTLE SHIPS.

"And there were also with Him other little ships."

THE harbour lies below me, thick with shipping—
Shining and smooth as glass it is to-day;
Westward the short sweet afternoon is slipping
Beyond the distant mountain-tops away.

East the sea stretches, widening to the ocean;
Past the breakwater curling waves begin,
And rushing over them with breezy motion
A fleet of fishing boats is coming in.

One rounds the pierhead, skimming like a swallow,
Anon her pinions droop—her journey's done;
More slowly in her wake her sisters follow,
Gracefully sweeping inwards one by one.

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While on the hills the gathering purple thickens,
And a faint haze is wrapping roof and spire;
While the sky flushes, and the sun's edge quickens
The clouds about him into quivering fire.

The boats glide in, and in, the warm light gleaming
Orange and red on each wet sail and mast;
I stand and watch them, lost in wistful dreaming,
Until the farthest off drifts by at last.

For lo! my eyes are mistily discerning
Another little ship, with brown sails set,
Toiling, beneath a sky all blue and burning,
Across the wavelets of Gennesaret.

Sweet memories of the Master rise before me,
Soft echoes reach me from His gracious lips.
Ah! richer for this precious freight you bore me,
My faith and love will be, O little ships!

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EN ATTENDANT.

THIS morning there were dazzling drifts of daisies in the meadows,
On sunny slopes the celandines were glittering like gold,
Across the bright and breezy world ran shifting shine and shadow,
The wind blew warmly from the west. Now all is changed and cold.

He's half an hour late,
While here I wait and wait.
Well! It is just my fate—
Too plainly I can see
He never cared for me.
How cruel men can be!

I wish those daffodils out there would cease their foolish flutter,
And keep their bobbing yellow heads for just a second still.

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y eyes ache *so!* Would someone please to partly close the shutter,
And move those hateful hyacinths from off the window-sill?

He's half an hour late,
No longer I shall wait.
Hark, there's the garden gate!
Love, is this you at last?
Ah, do not be downcast—
I knew the clocks were fast.

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OUTSIDE.

A SHINING pathway of light slopes down from the half-closed door,
Through the darkness on either hand it glimmers golden and wide,
A fair bridge spanning the night and the dread desolation o'er,
Stretching to me, where I stand forgotten, forlorn, outside.

If I dared to turn my feet away from the chill and the gloom,
If I followed yon radiant track with eager and noiseless tread,
Should I find her, my only sweet, in some fragrant fire-lit room,
Her soft dress shadowy black, and the glow on her bent bright head?

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Perhaps, if only I dared, she would not bid me begone;
Perhaps she would smile as of yore, and be kind
and forget to chide;
Perhaps if she knew how I cared—I will go; I will seek
her anon;
Alas! they have shut the door, and I am alone
outside.

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MARCH AND JULY.

In March the world was bare,
  Beneath the changeful sky;—
It lies adorned and fair,
Wrapped soft in sunny air,
With flowers everywhere,
  Now in July.

But in bleak March, unchilled,
  The thrushes warbled high,
And all the woods were filled
With songs the blackbirds trilled;—
The sweet bird-notes are stilled
  Now in July.

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In March the cold rain fell,
  But little heeded I,
For I was loved so well.
Love, have we lost the spell?
Is no such tale to tell,
  Now in July?

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SUNSET ON LEESON STREET BRIDGE, DUBLIN.

THE great red sun sets in a tender haze—
The city's breath that quivers everywhere—
An amethyst bloom lies soft on street and square,
And touched with glamour are the sordid ways.
Down the canal's long narrowing blackness strays
A gleam of luminous amber here and there;
The high white timber-piles grow almost fair
With flushing 'neath the ruddy western rays.

Be our lives ne'er so same and commonplace,
Some warm-hued hours will reach them even so,
Some transient sunset radiance glorify.
But ah! when the dread dark comes, and no trace
Is left of all the rosy afterglow,
The earth seems cold, and very wide the sky.

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A TOKEN.

About the old house and its garden small,
The day you saw them, shimmering sunshine lay;
In separate golden drops, gleaming and gay,
Laburnum cascades poured across the wall.
Since then the rain has never ceased to fall,
Blurred is each flower-pot, dripping each rose-spray:
Can I have only fancied that bright day?
Have you and I not met here after all?

Was it a dream, our sunlit talk? The rain
Plashes to-night, monotonous, unspent,
Down in the village street, so still and wet.
Ah! but there lies upon my counterpane
The gift you promised me, the gift you sent—
It and my heart convince me: we *have* met.

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"THIS LIFE'S PLEASANT DAYS."

THEY flush and fade when young spring woods are bright
With the wild hyacinth's ecstatic blue.
O'er shining summer seas, a radiant few
Drift to us, from deep caves of cool grey night.
Now, one will catch the waning Autumn light:
A sun-stained leaf, all clearly reddened through.—
Anon, in dreary Winter, one will strew
Warm foot-marks, on the lonely, dazzling white.

Ah, "this life's pleasant days," how fair they are!
And how they flash with vivid, sudden glow
Athwart our memory's distance, blurred and dim!
The world is very wide, and Heaven is far;
But God smiles on us sometimes as we go—
His wayfarers are not forgot of Him.

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RUS IN URBE.

THE sun blazed hotly, all one breathless day,
Above a certain squalid little street,
Till pallid toilers dragged their weary feet
More slowly, and wan children ceased to play.
Towards evening came a country cart that way:
It wafted sudden freshness through the heat,
For on the top of it, foam-white and sweet,
A bloomy fragrant bough of hawthorn lay.

As passed the cart with awkward lumberings,
Wistful eyes followed it, and many a face
Was lighted with the radiance of a smile.
Then did the Angel Hope, on shining wings,
Flit downward to that poor and sordid place,
And linger brightly there a little while.

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PARADISE LOST.

FAIR at my feet the lake of Como lies;
I hear its murmurous ripples ebb and flow.
Around me, ranging proudly row on row,
The dreamy purple-crested mountains rise.
All bright before me when I lift my eyes
Stands quaint Varenna in the sun a-glow;
And everywhere the crowding roses blow
In this most perfect place, this paradise.

And yet my wayward thoughts will not be bound,
Nor rest at all in this enchanted ground;
They wander forth far over land and sea,
And through the London streets in chill and gloom
They thread their way to some one, wanting whom
Even Paradise is Paradise Lost for me.

MENAGGIO, *May*, 1890.

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AN INTRUDER.

(RONDEAU.)

SPEEDWELL, with eyes of daring blue,
I most sincerely wish I knew
How 'twas, audacious speck ! you got
Into my tidy heartsease plot,
Where no one ever planted you.

You're a wild flower—you *know* it's true—
So rooting up is all your due,
And I must " weed " you on the spot,
Speedwell.

Yet—you're so sun-thrilled through and through—
It seems a cruel thing to do,
To blur at once your joyous lot.
I've changed my mind, I'll tell you what—
Stay where you are, and since you grew,
Speed well.

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SEALED ORDERS.

(TRIOLET.)

My little violets, sweet and blue,
When you have reached the world's far end,
Go straight to—*someone* (you know *who*,
My little violets, sweet and blue !)
And tell him that I send by you—
Ah ! well, *he*'ll find out what I send,
My little violets, sweet and blue,
When you have reached the world's far end.

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QUERY.

It is just as pleasant weather
As when we were here together;
Still the flush is on the heather,
And the poppies flutter gay.
Still the sunlit headlands glimmer,
And the ripples shine and shimmer;
But I find the brightness dimmer
Since you went so far away.

In your dull streets coming, going,
Do you see the poppies glowing?
Do you feel the salt breeze blowing
Over miles of silvery sea?
Midst the struggling and the scheming,
And the myriad gaslights gleaming,
Do you ever fall a-dreaming
Of our sunny days and me?

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SWALLOWS.

HITHER and thither flying,
Flickering to and fro,
Swallows their wings are trying
All in the sunset glow.
Purposeless now, and nestless,
They are eager for flight;
They are restless, ah! restless:—
They will start to-night.

Summer came with the swallows,
Bringing beautiful days;
Hawthorn foam in the hollows,
Gorse in a golden blaze;
Fields that were flushed with flowers,
Skies that were blue above,
And certain sunshiny hours
Of Hope and Love.

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Summer will go with the swallows;
  Autumn will travel here;
Then, when the winter follows—
  The desolate end of the year—
Skies will be dim with raining,
  Flowers will die in the cold;
But Hope and Love, remaining,
  Will be ours to hold.

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SWEETHEART DAISY.

(BALLADE.)

THE sunset all its golden rays
Athwart the skies of amber threw,
When down among the woodland ways
My bright-haired Daisy came in view.
(Soft dintings of a dainty shoe
Had pointed me the path she chose,
And why I followed up the clue
I know—and Sweetheart Daisy knows.)

We met—she turned an absent gaze
To where, far-off, a heron flew;
Nor spoke she till, with trembling phrase,
Her hand into my own I drew.
Then Sweetheart Daisy rosier grew
Than her small namesakes when they close,
And why she flushed so fair a hue
I know—and Sweetheart Daisy knows.

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What time the trailing garden sprays
Were heavy with the summer dew;
When quenched was the geranium blaze,
And dimmed the gay lobelia blue—
Daisy and I came pushing through
The long loose hedge of briar rose,
And why we were so glad, we two,
I know—and Sweetheart Daisy knows.

ENVOI.

Prince Love, all potent sovereign, who
The fate of lovers dost dispose,
Why this old world for *me* is new
I know—and Sweetheart Daisy knows.

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